

disputed in any way any standards, tests or decisions of the American Bureau of Shipping?"

"In the federal service the law defines authority. Just what the law is in this instance I do not know. I am certain that the department has been wrongfully accused. We want the truth. Just what the truth is nobody knows now. It is at the bottom of the Chicago river."

During all this Sec'y Redfield was very jolly. He is the first public official I have seen in four days who laughed and chuckled in discussion of responsibility for the Eastland sinking. The secretary passed me on to Lawyer Thurman.

"You know who is behind this accusation of the inspection service, don't you?" said Thurman. "It is all Victor Olander. He is secretary of the Lake Seamen's union and is trading on calamity."

"But Mr. Thurman, Olander says 240 of his sailors on the Great Lakes were drowned in the November gale of 1913 and your department made no investigation of his charges that the vessels were of rotten construction and that was one cause of such a death loss that month."

"There was investigation. Local inspectors held inquiries and reported to Washington. A report was filed by us. Olander wrote to me asking for the report. I replied he could have it if he would file a sworn statement as to his purpose in asking it. My letter was never answered by Olander."

"Mr. Thurman, The Day Book is interested in why those 240 sailors died on the Great Lakes in November, 1913. If we file a sworn statement with you as to why we want the report will you give us a copy of it?"

"Oh, no, I couldn't do that. You want it for publication. It is not for publication."

"Don't you think the public should know what you found out about why 240 men died on 34 vessels in one month? We understand 12 vessels sank with everybody on board, of-

ficers, crew and all.

"As a matter of public policy we would not give you that report. It would set a precedent and we could not copy extensive and thorough reports for the use of anybody and everybody who asks for them."

Thurman, like Redfield, looked happy and easy. He is a smiler and talked and looked like a man whose imagination had not pictured the 800 rigid, mangled, bloated bodies of men, women and babies that lay in the Second Regiment armory last Saturday night.

"It's always been a hard job to pry loose any real information from the steamboat inspection service," said Victor Olander today. "I replied to Solicitor Thurman's letter and told him that if he applied the affidavit ruling to all requests for reports from his department I would comply with the requirements. Thurman then wired me three words, 'Come to Washington.' I knew if I couldn't get the report by mail there was no use to go to Washington. It should be stated, however, that I wrote local inspectors asking whether they held investigations into the November, 1913, lake deaths of seamen. Local inspectors replied they had not held such investigations. These letters and the names of the local inspectors were produced before a congressional committee when the seamen's bill was considered last winter."

A BUSINESS INVESTIGATION

Secretary Redfield's commission to investigate the Eastland disaster ought to be able to make a thoroughly businesslike investigation.

According to newspaper announcements today the members will be Secretary of Commerce Redfield, Solicitor Thurman, Banker Harry A. Wheeler, Marvin B. Pool of Butler Bros. and some technical men from the Western Electric Co.

What's the matter with having at least one representative of the people on that commission?